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Memorial Tribute

TO

William McKinley,

Late President of the United States,

BY THE

Grand Lodge of Iowa,

Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons.

Wm McKinley

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SUBMITTED AND ADOPTED JUNE 4TH, A. D. 1902.

DAVENPORT, IOWA:
EGBERT, FIDLAR, & CHAMBERS.
1902.

(EXTRACT FROM THE RECORDS.)

IN GRAND LODGE, *June 4th, 1902.*

Report Special Committee — McKinley Memorial.

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Brother Morcombe (25), Chairman of the Committee, presented the report, which —

Upon motion of Brother Wilkinson (423), was adopted by a rising vote.

Brother Hugg (18) moved that a copy of the memorial, as read, be appropriately printed and sent to Mrs. McKinley, which motion —

Carried.

Grand Lodge of Iowa,

Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons.

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IN GRAND LODGE, Fifty-ninth Grand Annual Communication, held at Dubuque, Iowa, June 3d to 5th, A. D. 1902, A. L. 5902, the following Proceedings were had, and are here extracted from the records.

The Most Worshipful Grand Master, LEWIS JACKSON BAKER, in his Annual Address, referred to the death of Brother and President MCKINLEY in the following language:

Our Martyred President.

ON Saturday morning, the 14th day of last September, Brother WILLIAM MCKINLEY, the President of these United States, died from the effects of a bullet wound received about eight days before from a man — mankind, I beg your pardon — an enemy of government, of civilization, of progress, a dastardly, lawless being, an anarchist, who with a revolver concealed in his right hand, which had been bandaged so as to convey the impression that it had been injured, extended his left to be greeted by our President, whom he then shot twice. Shot our President, did I say? No, my brethren, it was our country he tried to assassinate and destroy — your home, my home. Every Mason and every true American, yea, humanity throughout the civilized world, was appalled at the crime and bowed in grief and sorrow. "He was a man of the people and for the people." A devoted lover of home, state, country, and humanity, in defense of which he offered his life upon the field of battle. He died as he lived — true to humanity and his God. Listen to his dying words, "Good bye; it is God's way; His will be done."

Masonry has an absolute abhorrence for all people who by disdainful word or act endeavor to weaken the

pride in or love of country. Masonry stands for home, for country, for God, and for humanity.

I would recommend that a committee be appointed to prepare a proper memorial to be presented to Mrs. McKinley by the Grand Lodge, and further, that a suitably inscribed memorial tablet be placed in our annual Proceedings.

"He fell at the post of duty,
And the nation's heart is wrung;
No death of greater beauty
By poet hath been sung,
In silence deep he shares the sleep
That falls on old and young.

"Out of the crime and madness,
Out of the gloom and pain,
Out of the shame and sadness,
The purpose of God is plain —
That the nation rise through sacrifice,
And turn its loss to gain."

In the report of the Grand Secretary we find this allusion to the

Assassination of Brother McKinley.

SINCE our last meeting the black shadow of grief has fallen across our land. The hand of a coward has stricken down the President of these United States in the period of his ripest usefulness, and when his wisdom and experience seemed most necessary to the well-being of the nation. There followed a brief time of world-wide anxiety and earnest prayer — and then the end. The nation ceased its labors, that it might kneel reverently beside the bier of its dead ruler, servant, and friend, while the whole world for a space forgot its bickerings to join in sympathy and mourning.

To the Masonic fraternity this death brought added grief. As citizens, we felt the loss as keenly as did our fellows, while we also mourned the brother "stricken down in the performance of his duty, a martyr to his fidelity." At this communication of the Grand Lodge, the first since his death, it is meet and fitting that some action be taken which shall stand on record forever as an expression of grief for our eminent brother, loyalty to the land we love, and detestation of the horrid crime, and the hellish doctrines which made it possible.

The Committee on the Grand Master's Address subsequently presented the following:

We most heartily endorse that part of the Grand Master's address wherein he recommends the appointment of a committee to draft a suitable memorial in honor of our martyred President, Brother William McKinley. We recommend that the committee be appointed and report at the present session. We also recommend that a tablet be inserted in this year's Proceedings in conformity with his recommendation.

Whereupon the Grand Master announced as a Special Committee on the "McKinley Memorial" Brothers Morcombe (25) and Coburn (521), to report at present session.

During the afternoon of the session of the second day, Brother Morcombe, from the Special Committee, presented and read the following tribute to the memory of our late Brother, President McKinley; which, on motion of Brother Wilkinson (423), was adopted by a rising vote.

BY ways incomprehensible, the purposes of God are wrought in the affairs of men and the destinies of nations. Ever and again there is demanded from the individual or the people a supreme sacrifice, that on the painful path of sorrow men may rise to higher things. In the hour of national pride death claims the manliest and kingliest, that the lesson of humility may be learned and faith be not forgotten.

Thrice within the life of a generation has this nation bent in grief at the bier of its noblest and best, death-stricken by murderous hand; thrice, with bowed head, has it shared in the black sacrament of grief, hoping against hope through dark days of suspense and long nights of agony; thrice has a whole people paced with slow and solemn tread in funeral march; and thrice with reverent hands have the names of our martyrs been inscribed on Fame's entablature and Sorrow's symbols given place to the bronze-lettered record of everlasting remembrance.

It is not wise nor needful that we again or here recite the cause of grief. Forever let the name of the misguided wretch who struck the coward blow be stricken from the records which men preserve for the future. Let us remember the act of the poor crazed brain only that we may guard against a repetition. But as to the hell-spawned creed, black with the slime of the pit and foul with the poisonous breath of malignant hate, which then worked to deadly end, and ever works in secret to other deeds of blood, let it not be forgotten. There is in this remembrance the call to stern duty — not prompted by revenge — but by the instinct of self-preservation. There is before us as men and as citizens the stamping out of this whole alien brood, generated in the old world mire of want and ignorance and cast as refugees or refuse upon our shores.

But we turn rather from these vile lives which degrade our estimate of humanity to him we mourn, whose character and manly virtues shall serve as example for generations yet to be. Clean and pure in body and in soul —

"Amid the mirk and mire he kept his heart
A temple for the Beautiful! All warm
And bright, with blessed light of Love, that window
Of our dim life which ever opes on God!"

It is to the lives of such men as this we point as being typical of what is best in American manhood —

and, let me add, in American Masonry. Whatever the duty presented, humble or high, it becomes to such souls the imperative, God-given work of the present. To the future is left its own labors and its own responsibilities. Reward may well be trusted to the justice of men, the approval of conscience, and the approbation of the All-Wise.

The life of William McKinley teaches us that opportunities are made by human effort and energy; that high place and honor comes to him who deserves well of his fellows, without the adventitious aids of wealth and birth. We follow this expanding and ever-rising career with interest and with profit in the contemplation. We find him ever bearing full share of citizen duty in civic life, answering to the call when men were sorely needed to test war's stern arbitrament, and after battle taking up again the homely round of toil.

So from point to point we trace his path until the suffrages of the nation had placed him as the peer of earth's greatest. We see him with head bared and bowed imploring God's guidance as he takes up his mighty task. He hears the cry of a suffering race in the islands of the sea. When protest was without avail and time had ripened to the purpose, he launched against ancient wrong the young strength of American manhood, and made a free people of those who had struggled ineffectually in their bondage. In the fiery

heat of political bitterness he preserved his soul in calm, and cherished with jealous care the honor of his people.

Then the Master saw, perchance, what our blinded eyes might not behold — that this life had reached its height of earthly greatness, and that as remembered example and incentive it might give more and be more to the nation and the world than if it wrought longer in the ways of mortality.

In olden story there is told of one, who sat at Arthur's table, type and pattern of all true manhood and perfect knighthood while the world may last, "whose strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure." Into his tranced and sinless sight there swept a vision of the Holy Grail, unseen by grosser eyes. So to the soul of this our brother we believe there was vouchsafed, or ere he passed, a vision of things unutterable in mortal speech; that his clean spirit looked beyond the mists of time into the spaces of eternal sunlight. And thus seeing the glory, as Sir Galahad beheld the holy vessel swinging down paths of heavenly splendor through the night, our brother gave to the tearful watchers his last message, that it might forever reinforce the faith of all men: "It is God's way; His will be done."

Need we here recount his private virtues, or tell you yet again of that manhood strong and true and tender, whose strength found noblest, most chivalric use in

loving guardianship of home; whose tenderness never failed for those he loved. The fierce and pitiless light which beats on those in high places found no flaw or blemish of which even jealous calumny might whisper to his detriment or shame.

His love was a life-long idyll; no dream of a summer day, to pass when flowers had faded. There was no call so imperative, no duty so engrossing, no pleasure so alluring but that his thoughts were turned by night or day to the wife who so sorely needed his constant support.

And when at last the black-winged angel touched his lips to muteness, still he turned fast-failing eyes to that pallid face beside his bed, that he might repeat yet again in soul language a message of love and comfort to the frail but cherished flower of his life.

God be thanked, in an age of indifference, when men boast of all the ties of home relaxed and broken, and stray hither and thither in disregard of vows and duty, that one true soul, standing full high to catch attention and enforce respect, has set example of manly virtue and domestic honor. To such as this there comes anew the promise uttered first on the Mount of Beatitudes: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

You can recall the sudden shock with which the nation heard the news of murderous assault. You remember the short period of prayer, of anxiety, and

then of anguish as in the solemn night hour there was flashed over land and sea to watchers everywhere the fatal message. Upon the whole land there fell the hush of silent grief. In cottage home and in the mansion of wealth there was the black emblem of mourning.

And then came the last sad scene, such as no land nor time had known before, when from the nation's capitol passed the funeral cortege to the old Ohio home and thence to the grave. The busy wheels of a continent's commerce ceased, the factory's hum was hushed, labor put by its tools, while tolling bells and booming guns beat out the solemn strokes of time from sea to sea.

It was finished. The thorny crown of earth's agony had become the star-tipped diadem of a martyr's glory —

"All Saviour-souls have sacrificed,
With nought but noble faith for guerdon;
And ere the world hath crown'd the Christ,
The man to death hath borne the burden!

"And heart-strings sweetest music make
When swept by suffering's fiery fingers!
And thro' soul-shadows starriest break
The glories on God's brave light-bringers."

As Masons we have pride in such a record as this of our dead. We have shared to the full in the grief of the nation at his untimely end; we have joined in

reprobation of the crime and the dogma of bitterness which prompted it. Devoted to God, to loyalty, and to our fellow-men, we wish to thus place ourselves on record. But for the brother passed, faith takes up for us a jubilant strain, and we believe that —

" When
His life burst its worn manacle of clay
And wore God's splendor 'round it like a raiment,
Throbbing with glory like a midnight star,
All Heaven was hushed to hear the Lord's ' Well done ! '
Then shining hosts and quiring orbs sang ' Welcome ! '
And angels crown'd him in their capitol.
For in his heart he kept God's image bright.
Love was his life-blood. Thro' the long work-day —
The dark and terrible night-time — aye, to death,
He nursed his love ; and God Himself is love."

To the suffering souls God giveth comfort, to those who mourn time brings relief, and when such national bereavements, seemingly without purpose, prompt despair —

" Take heart ! Tho' sown in tears and blood,
No seed, that's quick with love, hath perished,
Tho' dropped in barren by-ways — God
Some glorious flower of life hath cherished."

JOSEPH E. MORCOMBE,
G. F. COBURN,
} *Committee.*

ATTEST:

A true copy from the records.

Witness our hands and the seal of the M.·. W.·. Grand Lodge of Iowa, at Cedar Rapids, this first day of August, A. D. 1902.

W. S. Gardner

Grand Master.

Newton R. Parvin

Grand Secretary.

Masonic Record of William McKinley.

ILLIAM McKINLEY'S entrance into the Order was an incident of the war between the States. In Winchester there was a regular Lodge of Masons, officered by Confederate soldiers, or citizens on parole.

The desire of young McKinley was made known to the officers of Hiram Lodge, No. 21, of Winchester, his petition was presented, and he was elected. On the night of May 1st, 1865, at 7:30 o'clock, he presented himself for initiation. J. B. T. Reed, a Confederate chaplain, was Master of the Lodge, and conferred the Degree of Entered Apprentice upon the candidate. On the following morning he was instructed in the work, and on the evening of the same day the Degree of Fellow Craft was given. There was more instruction on the day following, and on the afternoon of May 3d, at three o'clock, he received the Master Mason Degree. But three Masons are now living who witnessed the initiation.

Returning from the war, Major McKinley demitted from the Winchester Lodge, and first affiliated with Canton Lodge, No. 60, of Canton, Ohio. When Eagle Lodge, No. 431, also of Canton, was organized, Brother McKinley became one of its charter members, and

continued his membership therein until his death. His interest in Freemasonry was marked, and never flagged nor failed. At different times in his busy career he left the affairs of state to attend to his Masonic duties. He was Grand Orator of the Grand Lodge of Ohio on the occasion of laying the corner-stone of the Masonic Temple at Canton.

In 1883 Brother McKinley received the Degrees of Royal Arch Masonry in Canton Chapter, No. 84, R. A. M., and in the following year (December 18th and 23d, 1884) he received the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, and was created a Knight Templar in Canton Commandery, No. 38, K. T., at Canton, Ohio, in both of which branches of Masonry he thereafter took great pleasure.

— *Adapted from Proceedings Grand Lodge of Ohio.*

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